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California Polytechnic State University

July 7, 2003

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Student Among Six Honored by CSU for Achievement, Service, Overcoming Obstacles

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A Cal Poly engineering student is among six students selected to receive The California State University's 2003-2004 William R. Hearst/CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, which honors students for an exceptional combination of academics, community service and character.

Anthony L. DeFont, a mechanical engineering senior from Sonora, will be honored at a meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees in Long Beach July 15 along with the five other winners, each from a different CSU campus. Each will receive a \$3,000 scholarship.

Selection for the systemwide award is based on financial need, superior academic performance and outstanding volunteer community service as well as having overcome profound personal challenges to achieve academic success.

DeFont is a dean's list scholar who was raised by relatives when his single mother was in jail and, later, killed in a random shooting. Developing a strong work ethic and sense of service, he became a leader at Cal Poly.

He chairs the American Society of Mechanical Engineers student chapter and serves as an officer in three other campus clubs. Almost single-handedly, he helped revive Pi Tau Sigma, an engineering honor society.

He has also worked widely in the community, serving at the local animal shelter, participating in beach cleanups, and helping at senior-citizen events. Through his efforts, a community service requirement was added to the membership standards of Pi Tau Sigma.

DeFont's interests include biomechanical engineering and business administration. He interned at Abbott Vascular Devices, working with vascular stents (small, expandable wire-mesh tubes inserted into arteries to keep the blood passages open), and hopes to establish his own engineering firm.

The awards are funded by personal contributions from members of the CSU Board of Trustees and an endowment created by the Hearst Foundation. Since its inception in 1974, the award has honored 92 students.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A photo of DeFont is available from Bob Anderson (see contact info).

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